

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An apparatus for protecting a passenger located in a first vehicle seat including a seat back, the apparatus comprising an air belt located in the lower portion of the seat back and configured to deploy along a back surface of the seat back to thereby protect a lower half of the body of a passenger sitting on a second seat positioned behind the first vehicle seat.
2. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a seat belt apparatus for restraining the passenger sitting on the seat, the seat belt apparatus including a buckle, a lap anchor, and a lowering mechanism for lowering at least one of the buckle and the lap anchor, wherein the air belt is disposed in the seat and decreases in length by inflation to thereby act as a driving power source for the lowering mechanism.
3. The apparatus of claim 1, further comprising a seat belt that is configured to be pretensioned when the air belt is inflated.
4. The apparatus of claim 3, further comprising a belt buckle configured to move downward when the air belt is inflated to thereby apply a pretension to the seat belt.
5. The apparatus of claim 3, further comprising a lap anchor configured to move downward when the air belt is inflated to thereby apply a pretension to the seat belt.
6. The apparatus of claim 4, wherein movement of the belt buckle is limited to the downward direction.
7. The apparatus of claim 5, wherein movement of the lap anchor is limited to the downward direction.
8. The apparatus of claim 1, wherein the air belt is operatively connected with at least one of a seat belt buckle and a seat belt lap anchor so that when the air belt inflates and decreases in length the at least one of the buckle and the lap anchor move downward.

9. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the connecting between the air belt and the at least one of the buckle and the anchor is a wire.

10. The apparatus of clam 9, wherein movement of the wire is limited to one direction.